



The Insider

www.senate.mi.gov/switalski

Inside State Politics with State Senator Mickey Switalski Senate District 10

November 12, 2004

Welcome to the electronic version of *The Insider*. I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support and for giving me an opportunity to represent you in the Michigan Senate. It is my sincere hope that this bi-weekly e-newsletter will keep you informed of the happenings in Lansing while staying true to the traditional style of *The Insider*. If you would like to contact me, please feel free to e-mail me at senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov or call me at my Roseville or Lansing office. You can also meet me in person during my constituent hours, coming to a library near you. Call my office and make an appointment or just walk in. See schedule for details.

Lame-Duck Session: Not too much “quack”

The clock is ticking on the final days of the 92nd Legislature.

When the clock strikes midnight and a New Year is upon us, any and all legislation that does not pass the legislature by then will expire. The slate will be wiped clean to make room for the 93rd legislature.

With the November election over, the Michigan legislature is embarking on the legislative period known as “lame-duck”. The “lame-duck” session occurs in even-numbered years and is used to describe the period of time between the November election and the end of the legislative session.

It is often known as the time of intense and hectic legislative activity and for many legislators, it represents a final chance to try to pass their favorite legislation and make an imprint on the legislative process.

The two-year session technically ends on December 31 and in years past, several controversial items have been taken up such as the expansion of charter schools in Michigan and the creation of the Detroit Area Regional Transportation Authority (DARTA).

This “lame-duck session” is expected to be busy but not controversial. Among the items the Legislature is expected to take up includes legislation that would ensure further enhance accountability for intermediate school districts (ISDs), legislation that would reduce the threat of lead-based paint in homes, legislation that would toughen the penalties against identity theft and legislation that would revamp the tax structure for residents of manufactured homes. Other issues that are expected to be addressed by the legislature include potential reforms of the Wayne County Mental Health system and legislation that would improve the collection of child support.

The House may also consider legislation that would ask voters to extend term limits and authorize video gaming terminals at race tracks (racinos). However, these items are not expected to be taken up by the Senate.

This past week, the Michigan Senate started movement on several of these issues. Among the highlights includes:

MEAP switch: A five-bill package that would scrap the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) test in favor of a different test passed the Michigan Senate by a 35-1 vote on November 10.

The legislation would drop the MEAP in favor of the Michigan Merit Exam for high school students. The Michigan Merit Exam would consist of a combination of a college admissions test such as the ACT, a workplace skills exam, and a social studies component.

The bills, of which I am one of the sponsors of, would also use the Michigan Merit Exam as the benchmark to assess adequate yearly progress under the federal No Child Left Behind Act and would also be used to award the Michigan Merit Award scholarships.

I support these bills and believe that the change would increase the amount of students attending college by providing them with a test that has meaning and is used in college admissions. We will no longer have to entice students to take the test with free pizza and pop. The change would help better prepare Michigan's students for college, would take less time to administer and would save parents about \$35 by not having to pay for the ACT themselves.

The bills head to the House for further consideration.

ISD Accountability: The Michigan legislature also passed legislation this week that would call for more random audits of intermediate school districts (ISDs) in light of the financial scandal that has rocked the Oakland ISD.

The package of legislation also requires the posting of information such as an intermediate school district's budget and travel expenses on the web and would create a conflict of interest policy for the intermediate school districts to follow. The bills also would outlaw the use of intermediate school district funds for the purchase of alcohol, jewelry and other gifts.

In addition, the bills would also limit millages to no more than 20 years and would require that taxes levied by intermediate school districts for a specific purpose be used for what it was intended for.

The bills will now head to the Governor for her approval.

Identity Theft: The Michigan Senate also passed several bills on November 10 that would combat identity theft, one of the fastest growing crimes in America. The package increases consumer protections such as requiring companies to not use an individual's social security number for identification purposes. The legislation would also give a victim of identity theft the ability to use a police report so that a credit agency can restore their credit rating.

The bills would also increase the penalty for identity theft, create a six-year statute of limitation and make it easier for the prosecution of identity theft in Michigan. The bills head to the House for confirmation of changes made in the Senate.

Mickey's TV Insider Show

Check out my TV Insider Show coming to a television station near you. Watch me interview local guests about politics, life, issues and concerns to our district.

Sterling Heights

Every Saturday and Sunday at 12:30 p.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Utica

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Clinton Township

Last week of every month- Sat thru Thurs
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Roseville

Every other Tuesday at 6:05 p.m.
(Comcast Channel 18)

*Please note that Sterling Heights/Utica/Clinton Township will show the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 5 and Wide Open West Channel 10. Clinton Township will air the TV Insider Show at various times during the last week of every month. Roseville can see the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 18.

Coffee Hours

*Please note that since the District Office is in Roseville, I do not have set coffee hours in Roseville. However, I encourage you to visit the Roseville office. We even have a coffee pot. Everyone is welcome to attend the coffee hours and discuss their issues and concerns.

Nov. 29
7-9 p.m.

Location: Clinton-Macomb Public Library
(35891 Gratiot, north of 15 Mile)

Dec. 6
7-9 P.M.

Location: Sterling Heights Public Library
(40255 Dodge Park)

Contact My Office

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